

**SUPREME COURT OF VERMONT
OFFICE OF THE COURT ADMINISTRATOR**

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TO: Members of the Vermont Bar

FROM: Patricia Gabel, Esq., State Court Administrator

RE: Evaluation of Judiciary's Electronic Case Management and e-filing Pilot Programs and Temporary CARES Act Funding for Tyler e-filing Use Fees

DATE: July 7, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

The Judiciary will be conducting an evaluation of the initial pilot rollouts of the Judiciary's new electronic case management system. The new system was rolled out in the Judicial Bureau in 2019. The first Superior Court rollout occurred in several counties in March of this year, a week before the COVID-19 pandemic led to the eventual declaration of a Judicial Emergency by the Vermont Supreme Court. We will also be evaluating the pilot of electronic filing (e-filing) that followed several weeks later in April.

The Judiciary will be seeking information about these initial pilot rollouts in Windham, Orange, and Windsor counties and in the Judicial Bureau. During this evaluation, we will consult with our many stakeholders, including representatives of the Vermont Bar Association, but also with other voluntary associations of attorneys and court users, law firms, and organizations dedicated to access to justice and to good government.

We are well underway in gathering information regarding e-filing fees and charges in other statewide implementations and will combine this research with statistics gathered from the initial use of e-filing in the Judicial Bureau and in these three pilot Vermont counties as we report to the Legislature in late October in accord with H. 961, the FY21 three-month state budget bill that was just signed by the Governor last week.

We are also pleased to announce that we have worked in collaboration with our vendor, Tyler Technologies, to develop a temporary process that enables court users to benefit from another provision of H. 961. The legislature has appropriated CARES Act funds for a grant to Legal

Aid to cover the cost of the Tyler e-filing use fees through December 30, 2020, “to ensure all court users have timely access to justice as the judicial system resumes operations relying on greater digital remote online processes to ensure public health and safety after closure due to COVID-19.”

During this period, the Tyler e-filing use fee will not be charged to filers directly. Rather, the Tyler e-filing use fee for all non-exempt submissions will be invoiced monthly to Vermont Legal Aid and paid through the grant appropriation until December 30th. This process will allow us to continue to gather statistics regarding e-filing use and behavior that will be valuable input to the report referenced above.

We look forward to working with many of you over the coming months as we solicit feedback on these pilot rollouts. We expect to utilize various methods, including focus groups and surveys, in gathering this information, and the Judiciary website will have updates on our process and progress. The latest updates and answers to frequently asked questions regarding electronic filing are available on our website at <https://www.vermontjudiciary.org/about-vermont-judiciary/electronic-access/electronic-filing>.

Please feel free to contact me if you are interested in participating in this feedback process. We appreciate your continued support of this critical initiative.

Thank you.
Pat